

## Despised Icon

### "Momento Mori"

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Here we are  
Rounding the edge again  
And I wonder if  
You recall what you said  
When I asked to hear  
Largest as yet unanswered question  
And you said, "why bother at all"

I just arrived by the  
Train from Bombay  
Never heard anyone  
Say it so plain

The prettiest girl in the room  
Stood, collected her things  
Fastened her coat up  
Around her fine throat  
And though you didn't notice there  
For just one moment well  
I was the prettiest woman with you  
Half a world away  
Trying hard to stay  
Aware of why I came  
You forgot the comment  
Forgot the moment  
Went on your way  
There's gotta be a better way  
To waste a day

Your mother, you told me  
Had been a great beauty  
And suffered profoundly  
The loss of her looks  
You gave a practiced,  
Exhausted expression  
Recited a line from  
A quotations book  
My father in his youth set off  
With a kite and a liter of wine  
Mad to determine  
The height of the sky

And the breadth of  
One human life  
No ribbons, no starting gun  
Sprinting around the sun  
Man's quaint little race  
The heaving contenders  
Get one thing to say  
And it's always the same:  
Our names,  
Chiming through space

We stayed up late  
Until it became early  
And camped in the cold  
On the hood of your car  
The neighbors, the papers,  
The radio, TV  
Said this evening we could see  
Thousands of fast-falling stars  
And that sort of thing happens  
Just once in lifetimes like ours

I'm hopeless nearsighted  
Not much for stargazing  
But couldn't let all of  
Those meteors pass  
This was our first  
This was our only  
This was our very last chance

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